

sterres to suffer thy lawe; so that the mone
sometymes hyning with hir ful hornes, met-
ing with alle the bemes of the sonne hir
brother, hydeth the sterres that ben lesse;
and somtyme, whan the mone, pale with
hir derke hornes, approcheth the sonne,
leseth hir lightes; and that the eve/sterre
Hesperus, whiche that in the firste tyme of
the night bringeth forth hir colde arys-
inges, cometh eft ayein hir used cours, &
is pale by the morwe at the rysing of the
sonne, and is thanne cleped Lucifer. Thou
restrainest the day by shorter dwelling, in
the tyme of colde winter that maketh the
leves to falle. Thou dividest the swifte
tydes of the night, whan the hote somer is
comen. Thymightatempreth the variaunts
sesons of the yere; so that Zephirus the
debonair wind bringeth ayein, in the first
somer sesoun, the leves that the wind that
highte Boreas hath refte away in autumpne,
that is to seyn, in the laste ende of somer;
and the sedes that the sterre that highte
Arcturus saw, ben waxen heye comes whan
the sterre Sirius eschaufteth hem. Ther nis
nothing unbounde from his olde lawe, ne
forletheth the werke of his propre estat.

THOU governour, governinge alle
things by certain ende, why refu-
sestow only to governe the werkes
of men by dewemanere? Why suffrest thou
that slydinge fortune to morneth so grete en-
trechaunginges of thinges, so that any-
ous peyne, that sholde dewely punissheth
felouns, punissheth innocents? And folk
of wikkedemancres sitten in heye chayres,
and anyyinge folk treden, & that unright-
fully, on the neckes of holy men? And ver-
tu clershyninge naturelly is hid in derke
derkenesses, and the rightful man bereth
the blame and the peyne of the felon. Ne
forsweringe ne the fraude, covered and
kembd with a fals colour, ne anyoyeth nat to
shrewes; the whiche shrewes, whan hem
list to usen hir strengthe, they rejoyssen
hem to putten under hem the sovereyne
kings, whiche that poeple withouten
noubre dreden.

THOU, what so ever thou be that
knittest alle bondes of thinges,
loke on thise wrecchede erthes; we
men that ben nat a foule party, but a fayr
party of so grete a werk, we ben tormented
in this see of fortune. Thou governour,
withdraw and restreine the ravissching
flodes, and fastne and ferme thise erthes
stable with thilke bonde, with whiche thou
governest the hevene that is so large.

Prose V.

Hic ubi continuato dolore de latravi.

WHAN hadde, with
a continuall some,
sobbed or borken
out these thinges,
she with hir chere
pesible, and noth-
ing amoeved with
my compleintes,
seide thus: Whan
I say thee, quod
she, sorweful and wepinge, I wiste anon
that thou were a wrecche and exiled; but I
wiste never how fer thyne exile was, yif thy
tale ne hadde shewed it to me. But certes,
al be thou fer fro thy contree, thou nat nat
put out of it; but thou hast failed of thy
weye and gon amis. And yif thou hast lever
for to wene that thou be put out of thy
contree, than hast thou put out thyself
rather than any other wight hath. For no
wight but thyself ne mighte never han don
that to thee. For yif thou remembre of what
contree thou art born, it nis nat governed
by emperours, ne by governement of mul-
titude, as weren the contrees of hem of
Athenes; but oo lord and oo king, and that
is God, that is lord of thy contree, whiche
that rejoyseth him of the dwelling of his
citezenes, and nat for to putte hem in exil;
of the whiche lorde it is a soverayne fredom
to be governed by the brydel of him and o-
beye to his justice. Hastow foryetten thilke
right olde lawe of thy citee, in the whiche
citee it is ordeined and established, that
for what wight that hath lever founden
therin his sete or his hous than elleswhere,
he may nat be exiled by no right from that
place? For whoso that is contened inwith
the palis and the clos of thilke citee, ther
nis no drede that he may deserve to ben
exiled. But whoso that leteth the wil for to
enhabite there, he forletheth also to deserve
to ben citezein of thilke citee. So that I sey,
that the face of this place ne moveth men nat
so moche as thyne owne face. Ne I axe nat
rather the walles of thy librarie, aparayled
and wrought with yvory & with glas, than
after the sete of thy thought. In whiche I
putte nat whylom bokes, but I putte that
that maketh bokes worthy of prys or pre-
cious, that is to seyn, the sentence of my
bokes. And certainly of thy desertis, bi-
stowed in comune good, thou hast seid
sooth, but after the multitude of thy gode
dedes, thou hast seid fewe; & of the honeste
or of the falsnesse of thinges that ben
aposed ayeins thee, thou hast remembred
thinges that ben knowen to alle folk. And
of the felonyes and fraudes of thyne ac-
cusours, it semeth thee have ytouched it
forsothe rightfully & shortly, al mighten

the same thinges betere and more plenti-
ously ben couth in the mouthe of the
poeple that knoweth al this.

THOU hast eek blamed gretly and com-
pleined of the wrongful dede of the
senat. And thou hast sorwed for my
blame, & thou hast wopen for the damage
of thyrenoun that is apayred; and thy laste
sorwe eschauftede ayeins fortune, & com-
pleinest that guerdouns ne ben nat even-
liche yolden to the desertes of folk. And
in the latere ende of thy wode Muse, thou
preydest that thilke pees that governeth
the hevene sholde governe the erthe. But
for that manye tribulaciouns of affeccions
hamassailed thee, and sorwe and ire & wep-
inge todrawen thee dyversely; as thou art
now feble of thought, mightier remedies
ne shullen nat yit touchen thee, for whiche
we wol usen somdel lighter medicines: so
that thilke passions that ben woken harde
in swellinge, by perturbaciouns flowing
into thy thought, mowen waxen esy and
softe, to receiven the strengthe of a more
mighty and more egre medicine, by an esier
touchinge.

Metre VI.

*Cum Phebi radiis grave
Cancri sidus inestuat.*

WHAN that the hevy sterre of
the Cancre eschaufteth by the
bemes of Phebus, that is to
seyn, whan that Phebus the
sonne is in the signe of the
Cancre, whoso yeveth thanne
largely hise sedes to the feldes that refu-
sen to receiven hem, lat him gon, bigyled
of trust that he hadde to his corn, to acorns
of oles. Yif thou wolt gadre violettes, ne
go thou not to the purpur wode whan the
feld, chirkinge, agryseth of colde by the
felnesse of the winde that highte Aquilon.
Yif thou desirest or wolt usen grapes, ne
seke thou nat, with a glotonous hond, to
streyme and presse the stalkes of the vine
in the first somer sesoun; for Bachus, the
god of wyne, hath rather yeven his yiftes
to autumpne, the later ende of somer.

GOD tokneth & assigneth the tymes,
ablinge hem to hir propres offices;
ne he ne suffreth nat the stoundes
whiche that himself hath devyded and con-
stremed to ben ymedled togidere. And
for thy be that forletheth certain ordinaunce
of doinge by overthrowinge wey, he hath
no glade issue or ende of his werkes.

Prose VI.

*Primum igitur paterisne me pauculis ro-
gacionibus.*

FIRST woltow suf-
fre me to touche &
assaye the estat of
thy thought by a
fewe demaundes,
so that I may under-
stonde what be the
manere of thy cura-
cioun? Axe me,
quod I, at thy wille,
what thou wolt, and I shal answer.

HO seide she thus: Whether wene-
stow, quod she, that this world be
governed by foolish happes and
fortunous, or elles that ther be in it any
governement of resoun?

CERTES, quod I, I ne trowe nat in
no manere, that so certein thinges
sholde bemoeved by fortunous for-
tune; but I wot wel that God, maker and
mayster, is governour of his werk. Ne never
nas yit day that mighte putte me out of the
sothnesse of that sentence.

SO is it, quod she; for the same thing
songe thou a litel herbiforn, and bi-
weyledest and biweptest, that only
men weren put out of the cure of God. For
of alle other thinges thou ne doutedest
nat that they nere governed by resoun. But
owh! (i. page!) I wondre gretly, certes, why
that thou art syk, sin that thou art put in so
holsom a sentence. But lat us seken dep-
per; I conjecte that ther lakketh I not nere
what. But sey me this: sin that thou ne
doutest nat that this world be governed
by God, with whiche governailes takestow
hede that it is governed?

ANNETH, quod I, knowe I the sen-
tence of thy questioun; so that I
ne may nat yit answeren to thy de-
maundes.

INAS nat deceived, quod she, that
ther ne faileth somwhat, by whiche
the maladye of thy perturbacioun is
crept into thy thought, so as the strengthe
of the palis chynning is open. But sey me
this: remembreth thou what is the ende of
thinges, and whider that the entencioun of
alle kinde tendeth?

IHAVE herd it told somtyme, quod
I; but dreminesse hath dulled my
memorie.

CERTES, quod she, thou wost wel
whennes that alle thinges ben com-
en and procedeth?

I wot well, quod I, and answered, that
God is beginning of al.

AND how may this be, quod she, that,
sin thou knowest the beginning of
thinges, that thou ne knowest nat
what is the ende of thinges? But swiche